

ABSTRACT

CREATIVE PROJECT: Land/locked Bodies

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In this collection of poetry, I engage with the Midwestern Gothic traits of the grotesque, the macabre, and the supernatural to create a space of tilted reality and transformation, blurring the line between human and nature in ways that resist expected images of the rural American Midwest as static, wholesome flyover country. These transformations include: humans turning to objects/places; objects/places turning to humans; and the transformation of the body into other living organisms via decay. While this collection was primarily influenced by my own experiences living and working on my family's farm, influences of other poets can certainly be heard—Wendell Berry (for his meditative and observational qualities), Robert Bly (for his deep image poems that blur reality through psychic leaps), Matsuo Bashō (for his strong sense of desolation and transience), and Ross Gay (for his intertwining of human and natural concerns). While each of these poets has their own characteristic traits and styles, a common thread tying them together is an interest in the relationship between humans and the natural world. In this collection, I join that conversation, adding my own voice in an effort to explore how humans fit into this strange, often overlooked region haunted by decaying barns and the ghosts of lost farms.